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Chinese was taught in this way, which had no practical everyday use, children naturally continued to speak and think in their own tongue. Now that written Chinese closely follows the spoken language it may in time gradually displace the Min Chia spoken language altogether.

Up to the present this has not occurred, for even well educated Min Chia, fluent both in speaking and writing Chinese, continue to converse in Min Chia among themselves. Yet it is certain that the contact with Chinese lasting already for so many centuries has greatly corrupted the Min Chia language. In the Ta Li district the system of counting is now completely mixed, Min Chia and Chinese numerals being used in turn in the most confusing way. Many Chinese words are also used even when Min Chia equivalents exist, and there is no general rule for their usage. It largely depends which word occurs to the speaker first. As however the Min Chia usually pronounce these loan words in accordance with Min Chia phonology, the consequence of a widespread knowledge of Chinese may well be the appearance of a new dialect composed of Chinese words pronounced in a manner incomprehensible to Chinese of other districts.

Although the political and military fusion of the Min Chia and Chinese is complete, and the influence of a purely Chinese educational system is making an impression on the language, the social organisation of a Min Chia village and the kinship system retain features at variance with Chinese custom. Certain practices of the Min Chia were theoretically contrary to the law under the Manchu Dynasty, if they are not still so, but no attempt to change these customs has been made by the government, nor are such changes in prospect. Among the Chinese, the *tsu* a word which has been not too happily translated as "clan", is an important feature of society and the locality in which a family dwells is of secondary importance. The Min Chia do not have an autochthonous word

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for this patrilineal group bearing the same surname. They have borrowed the word from the Chinese, and now use it to denote people of the same surname who are known to be related, but it is a Chinese concept, and does not play an active part in their social organisation.

To the Min Chia it is the village, not the kin group, which is the fundamental social unit above the family. People living in the same village, no matter what surname they bear, jointly revere a common "ancestor" or more strictly, "founder", known as the *Ber Dser*, the "Original Ancestor", who is the reputed founder of the settlement. In Min Chia villages, where there may be as many as two hundred families, or as few as forty, three or four surnames are the rule, and no villages inhabited only by one *tsu*, common in Chinese districts, are found. In consequence of this the type of village name common in most parts of China, such as Chang Chia T'sun "village of the Chang Family" are never found in the Min Chia districts, where names such as "Chicken Village" or other descriptive names are usual. While the *Ber Dser*, the Founder, is often said to be the ancestor of one of the families living in the village, this is not necessarily the case, the worship paid to him is thus not ancestor worship, but the cult of a Genius Loci, open to all the inhabitants and not the special duty of one family.

The *tsu* or patrilineal group is not important to the Min Chia because they do not practise exogamy, and the *tsu* is thus shorn of its main function. When it is remembered that to the Chinese marriage with one of the same surname, even when no relationship can be traced, is strictly forbidden, the wide difference in Min Chia custom is apparent, for the Min Chia not only marry members of families with the same surname as themselves, but also paternal cousins of the same generation. Since the primary function of the surname among the Chinese is to locate the individual in his or

643 and the kuan-shih. Since the t'ou-mu does not speak Chinese, he
624 has a Chinese secretary to deal with the district officials, with whom he communicates through an interpreter. The t'ou-mu appoints the kuan-shih and discharges them if they are not qualified. The kuan-shih are not paid. Everyone is obliged to accept the post of kuan-shih if appointed by the t'ou-mu. Length of office is not determined; it runs between one to three years. The kuan-shih must help the t'ou-mu carry out his duties. For example, they are sent by him to some tent community to conduct inquiries in legal matters, such as to investigate a plunder. The tent communities do not have a special local council.

643 The chief duties of the t'ou-mu are the following: He regulates
701 the distribution of pastureland, and determines when the nomads
648 are to move from one pasture to another. The oatfields in the region of the winter pasturelands are the property of the t'ou-mu and are distributed by him. Rent, usually in the form of butter, must be paid him for the oatfields. He is the war lord of the tribe, and as such he can recruit eligible men for military service, /77/ likewise mounts and pack animals (horses and yaks). In case of war he must
643 put his soldiers at the disposal of the t'u-szu of Labrang. He and
651 his sub-chiefs must collect the taxes levied by the Chinese govern-
648 ment on the Fantzu, and hand them over to the district official of Hsia-ho. I could not ascertain whether the t'ou-mu withholds a certain sum for himself from the taxes he collects. The t'ou-mu must also put mounts and pack animals at the disposal of the Chinese district official when the latter or one of his subordinates travels
643 through the territory of the Mewu-Fantzu. The t'ou-mu has the
681 same prerogatives as an incarnation, in that he can demand a nine-old indemnity if he has been robbed. The t'ou-mu also has the privilege of donating the largest branch of a bush and a particularly long dart for the obo at the obo festival.

From what we have said about the position and authority of the t'ou-mu, it follows that he and his officials do not have a particularly great influence on the members of a tribe. We have also mentioned the fact that the individual tent communities do not
618 have regular chieftains. As far as I could ascertain, the clan does not have a great influence in the social and judicial life. There are no clan chieftains like the Chinese tsu-ch'ang.

576 On the other hand, certain societies have formed which are given the general name of ts'aowa (1) and whose chief function

1. Ekvall 4), page 69, briefly mentions these societies

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

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/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./